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## Some of the Best Prose Written in Illinois High Schools in 1955

Selected by EMMA MAE LEONHARD and MAURINE SELF  
of Jacksonville High School.

In reading the 365 prose selections, we found much superior prose. Although we first considered organization, development, clarity, originality, and sincerity, when we finally had to eliminate some of the superior ones because of the limited space of the bulletin, we then took into consideration the mechanical errors. Each selection received at least two careful readings; those that survived, at least four.

There were several quite long selections which we hesitated to publish because of the size of the bulletin in spite of their superior quality of sustained prose.

### PENCIL TRACKS

A returned paper without the instructor's written criticism, no matter how good the grade may be, is like a drink of cold lemonade without any sugar in it. Nothing in the world is so disappointing; nothing leaves the student with such a flat feeling as does the search through the essay, the history report, or whatever the paper may be, for the note of praise or criticism which is not there. It is like cracking a nice large hazelnut and finding the shell empty.

They are such personal things—confidential words from the instructor to the student, which no one else may see or hear, unless the student chooses to show them to a pal. They mean a great deal more to him than the grade-mark up in the right-hand corner of the paper. Personally, I should rather receive a grade C on a paper, if accompanied by a note from the teacher who graded it, than a nice big, red A without the note.

It doesn't make much difference where these notes are written, just so they are there. I have found them scattered here and there, at the top of the page, along the margins, and between the lines, all over my papers from one end of the page to the other. It's real sport hunting them, one that arouses a good deal of enthusiasm, especially when the hunter can be quite sure the end of the search is going to bring him the prize he is hoping for, a note which tells him what was good and what was bad in his paper.

It doesn't make much difference, either, to what racial class these notes belong. Whether they are red, green, blue, or just plain lead-gray, they accomplish their purpose just as efficiently as if they were written in gold.

Sometimes they are exceedingly difficult to decipher, owing to the fact that they were slightly jammed and crowded into their corners; but they are there, and they tell the student everything he wants to know, frankly, quickly, and decisively just when he wants to know it the most.

There is no doubt about it. He likes to see messages that smile, but if they frown, he knows that something he has written is all wrong and he'll have to get busy and make it right. How much easier it is to do that when those little notes keep repeating their message to him over and over again until he has satisfied their demands.

Some of them make the student's ears burn with their twinging, biting sarcasm. They arouse his anger, and he swears he'll "make the teach eat those words yet." He reads them again and again until their meaning has been seared into his soul. It hurts, but he'll never again forget to cross his t's or dot his i's.

Then, of course, there are the prim, neatly written exhibitions of penmanship that the student finds at the end of his paper, exactly three lines below the last line of his own writing. They are carefully indented, standoffish paragraphs of exposition. Very worthy they are as they would have the reader know. For my part, however, I prefer the scrawly ones perched intimately over the left ear of one of my phrases, or stepping on the toes of a flowery adjective.

No matter how they look, where they are, nor what they say, those confidential notes, in search of which the student eagerly scans his paper, are welcome. Without them, a grade of A plus could not be perfect.

MARGIE TODD, East H. S., Rockford, '56  
Adele Johnson, teacher



## TORNADO

One hot spring day I was strolling along our farm in Kentucky when my mother called me. She told me something that scared me. She said a tornado was heading our way and she didn't want my little brother to know about it.

Then as I was pumping water from our well, I heard a noise that sounded like a gigantic train. When I looked behind me, I saw in the distance an ugly black twirling cloud. I knew it was a tornado. It scared me so much I dropped the pail of water and ran into the house.

The giant twister darted across our corn field, ripping out our crops of corn. Then it was over. The sky was clearing up.

My little brother said to me, "We had a big storm, didn't we?" I said, "No. We just had a tornado."

MIKE GURLEY, Centennial J. H. S., Decatur, '61  
Helen Hunsinger, teacher

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## THE CHAMPION

The knife glittered as it arched through the air. He wondered wildly if it would find its mark. He had practiced every spare moment, as he was not as skilled as the others. He knew he would be acknowledged as their leader if he could prove himself. The faces of the others were tense. Would the newcomer beat them at their own game? The knife landed, the hilt quivered; yes, he was now The Champion of Mumblety-Peg Gang!

BARBARA BREWNER, Alton Senior H. S., '57  
Mr. Carr, teacher

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## ONE-SENTENCE DESCRIPTIONS

Standing in the market square, the small child, in her ragged clothes and with her grubby hands folded behind her, stared soberly through her soft brown eyes at the statue of a beautiful maiden, dreamily wishing that someday she would be a lovely lady.

JOYCE SHAW, Alton Senior H. S., '57  
Mrs. Wollerman, teacher

The curly-haired, suntanned little boy in grubby shorts and old sneakers laughed and tumbled with the fat, wiggly, warm-tongued puppy as they scampered home across the flower-flecked meadow.

CAROL VORACEK, Alton Senior H. S., '57  
Mrs. Wollerman, teacher

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### OLD KING COLD

Once upon a time, in the far-away land of Influenza, there reigned a monarch whose name was Old King Cold. Now, since he was getting old, as his name suggests, Old King Cold began to wonder about who would inherit his kingdom when he died.

Now, it happened that Old King Cold had three sons, and their names were Cough!, Ker-chew! and Ahem! One day Old King Cold asked Cough!, Ker-chew! and Ahem! to come into the throne room, along with the Prime Minister, whose name was Snort!.

"I have called you here, Cough!, Ker-chew!, Ahem! and Snort!," began Old King Cold, "to discuss what will happen to my kingdom, Influenza, when I die. What do you think about it, Ahem!?"

"Well, Father," said Ahem!, "I think I should have the whole Kingdom of Influenza. After all, I have done more to help you rule than Cough! or Ker-chew!"

"Now, wait a minute, Ahem!," replied Ker-chew!, "haven't I given a lot of my time to help the people of the Kingdom of Influenza obtain a higher standard of living? Why, just last week I gave half my monthly allowance to help build a new hospital for laryngitis sufferers. I think I should get the whole kingdom myself."

"Hold it," said Cough!, "Neither Ker-chew! nor Ahem! deserves to inherit the Kingdom of Influenza. After all, I'm the oldest, and a kingdom always goes to the eldest son."

"You're wrong, Cough!," said Ahem!, "I think I - - -"

"Oh, shut up, Ahem!," shouted Cough!.

"Look here, Father," said Ker-chew!, "Neither Ahem! nor Cough! is - - -"

"Boys, boys, boys!" warned Old King Cold, "please don't argue. We can settle this by peaceful means. I have an idea—when I die, you boys can throw dice, or draw straws, or something like that, to see who inherits the Kingdom of Influenza. Is that all right with you, Cough!, Ker-chew! and Ahem!?"

"Excuse me, your Majesty," interrupted Snort!, who had been silent up to this time. "Perhaps it would be a better idea if you divided the kingdom into three parts, and gave one part to Cough!, one to Ker-chew!, and one to Ahem!"

"Why, that's an excellent idea, Snort!," replied Old King Cold. "Do you boys think so?"

"Yes!" answered Cough!, Ker-chew! and Ahem!

And so it was agreed that the kingdom of Influenza was to be divided into three parts, and Cough!, Ker-chew! and Ahem! were each to receive a part. But Old King Cold lived so long, that by the time he died, Cough!, Ker-chew! and Ahem! had all died of pneumonia, so the whole kingdom went to Old King Cold's wife, whose name was Kleenex.

RICHARD C. LEONARD, Bloomington H. S., '56  
Lorraine Kraft, teacher

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### SENTRY

He has but one duty, this sentry. As he marches to and fro across the gateway, he is a wooden soldier; so much so that, as he performs his rigid about-face, I expect to see the wind-up key protruding from his back. He seems to be impervious to the outside world; that is, unless some person would attempt to cross into the hallowed ground that he so zealously guards. Each step is the same, even to the degree that his pants-legs wrinkle at the same instant in the same place. His clothes are like those on a new doll, everything immaculately clean. All around him, he has an aura of complete separation from everything. Looking more closely, you may see tiny, inconspicuous cracks in his thin coating of veneer, which make you realize that for all his automation he is really only human after all.

JOHN ALAN WOODRUFF, Carlinville Community High, '57  
Mary Hoyt Stoddard, teacher



## DEAR DIARY

Monday  
November 20th

Dear Diary,

Mom pulled a cute caper this morning. She always springs her little plots on me at breakfast, while I'm still half asleep. This conversation you gotta hear for yourself—it loses too much in the translation.

"Ellen," she says, "you'll never guess who called me yesterday afternoon."

"Was it - -," I tried.

"Rose Carter," she continues, ignoring my attempt. "I went to college with her, only she was Rose Williams then. We were never very friendly, but we *were* (strong emphasis on the *were*) sorority sisters, so what could I say?"

"What do you mean, what could you say?" I inquire, not exactly following.

"Well, she just moved into town last week!" She ends this sentence with a triumphant flourish of her pancake turner.

"So?" I ask.

"So," she continues, "the conversation gets around to husbands and children, and," she pauses here, partly for effect and partly on account of her pancakes. "And, she has a daughter just your age!" She punctuates this little gem of information by plunking the maple syrup down soundly in front of me.

"Again, so?" I says.

"So I told her you'd get her daughter a date for the dance Friday night."

This is when my orange juice goes down the wrong pipe and I get a fit of coughing.

"Now Ellen," she says reproachfully, "it's not as bad as all that. I'm not asking that you get chummy with her—just find her a date."

"Just find her a date," I mock. "Mom, I haven't got a date myself—yet."

"Now, now, I'll bet a dozen boys have asked you already." With this she grabs my orange juice before I can make another lunge at it.

You see, Dear Diary, Mom's sort of got it figured that I'm the most popular girl in school and can grab off any guy I want.

It was getting late so I make a dash for the door.

"Will you?" Mom calls after me.

"Oh sure, Mom, sure," I answer, forgetting what we were talking about.

So that's it, Dear Diary. I ask you, has this woman missed her calling? Boy, what a recruiting officer she'd make for the U. S. Army!

Later I tell Linda about having to find an extra boy. She says not to worry, she knows plenty of drips. That's what we've got this new girl pegged for, a drip. I mean, aren't these "My dearest girl friend's daughter" type usually drips? Anyway, we finally get Clarence Potts to take her, but somehow I get the feeling he'd rather stay home with his slide rule.

Well, I should worry about other girls' dates. I have enough problems with my own. You know, what I told Mom about not having a date yet wasn't exactly true. I'm sure Paul Green is taking me—he's just a little shy, that's all.

Tuesday

November 21st

Dear Diary,

Mom was real het up about my digging up a date for Sharon (that's the new girl). Of course she didn't exactly phrase it that way. Dig up, I mean. But where else would I get an extra boy on such short notice?

Anyhow, I notice that Mom's beating my eggs kind of viciously this morning and, by the gleam in her eye, I know something is tickling her sleeve.

"Ellen," she says, "I know you like to walk to school with Linda, but couldn't you two call for Sharon on the way? It's be a nice gesture—after all she is a new girl in a strange town."

I start to say I gotta get to school early, but Mom gives me the address and it's right next door to Paul's house. So I decide it's the least I can do for Mom.

After I get Linda, we walk over to Pine Street, where this Sharon lives.

"I sure hope your mother doesn't want us to drag this new girl everywhere," Linda wails.

"Yeah," I agree, and start looking around for Paul, but I don't see him. He probably wouldn't say "Hi" to me while I was with Linda anyway, seeing as how he's so shy.

"I guess this is it," Linda says, so she goes up and rings the doorbell.

I'm just standing there, looking over toward Paul's house, when the door opens. There she was, Dear Diary, this—this doll! She's

got real black hair that swishes when she nods, and the biggest, bluest eyes, and that skin—wow! If you can take this all right, let me add that there wasn't much wrong with the rest of her either.

I just stand there gaping, until Linda gives me a poke with her elbow. "Sh-Sh-Sharon?" I stammer.

"Yes," she purrs, "you must be Ellen. Mother said you'd be over. I'll be ready in a jiffy. Would you like to come in and wait?"

"Oh no, we'll wait here," Linda says real quick-like. And she looks like she's got a mouthful of water she can't swallow.

As soon as Sharon slinks back inside, Linda collapses on the porch railing. "Whewee, did we ever goof!" she shrieks, and she sounds toward hysterics.

"What's so funny?" I ask, hoping that Paul is immune to blue-eyed, fair-skinned brunettes.

"Clarence!" Linda manages to gasp.

"Oh. Well, we'll just have to—" and then I get this mental picture of Sharon paired up with Clarence, and I collapse on the glider.

When Sharon comes out again, she stands in the doorway, giving us both a disdainful look. "Are you two ready?" she asks, with a scornful lift to her eyebrows.

I decide we'd better tell her about her date now, so I plunge right in. "Sharon," I says, "there's going to be a dance in the gym Friday night. We fixed you up a date for it."

"That's sweet of you, honey," she coos, "but I already have a date for the dance."

"Gee, that's swell," I exclaim, shooting a glance at Linda, who's still recovering from her hysteria.

"Who're you going with?" Linda gasps.

"Well," she laughs, "I don't even know his name, but he lives right next door. Do either of you know him?"

"P-Paul Greene," I stammer, and I get the feeling I'd better not try to stand up for awhile.

"Hey, are you two coming?" Sharon demands, and when nobody answers, she just slithers down the walk.

So now, Dear Diary, tell me, should I try suicide maybe—or homicide?

CAROL KERPER, Bloom Township H. S., Chicago Heights, '56  
Juanita L. Schoff, teacher



## THE FASTEST RIDE OF MY LIFE

I wasn't in the habit of or even used to doing this sort of thing, but what had to be done had to be done. I was on the corner of Fourteenth Street and Fiftieth Avenue, just about the busiest part around here, being dragged by a St. Bernard. Mom's anniversary was coming soon, and I was set on buying her an electric coffeemaker. She had been wanting one for a long time, in fact, ever since she was married. Since Dad was my only source of money, I had decided to do some odd jobs around the neighborhood like babysitting and light house-cleaning.

When Mr. Paul had asked me if I would babysit for a one-year-old, I agreed to do so. Little did I know the one-year-old was a St. Bernard that he was keeping while his brother was vacationing. When Mr. Paul handed me the dog's leash, I was barely able to learn the dog's name before I went flying down the street. That dog had the strength of a gorilla, traveled like a greyhound, and jumped like an antelope. He went galloping and I, flying, down the blocks, each dragging the other. When the St. Bernard finally tired and slowed down, I could just keep my feet on the walk. After a couple of blocks at this pace, his vim was back, and he traveled again at top-rate speed.

Most of the people I had a chance to glance at were holding their sides with laughter. I have never been so humiliated or so embarrassed in my whole life. When I finally stopped trying to hold the dog back and told him to head for home, he raced in the general direction of Mr. Paul's house.

I didn't have quite enough money for that coffeemaker. In desperation I told my tale of woe to Dad, and we made a deal.

PATRICIA CZYZEWSKI, J. Sterling Morton H. S., '57  
Grace E. Elliott, teacher

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## AGE MAKES THE DIFFERENCE

Sue hurried into the house and between sobs shouted, "Mother! Mother! Do you know what Johnny did? Oh, it was awful. Mother, do you think he will ever grow up?"

"Now, Sue, calm yourself, and tell me what is the matter," Mother replied in her usual tone.

"Well, when we left for the Kellys' dinner party he promised he would be on his best behavior. Everything was perfect till he spied the finger bowl." Sue set herself in a big chair and continued,

"He picked up the finger bowl with his hands and drank the contents. To make it even worse he began coughing. Everyone just sat there staring at me as if it was my fault he was choked on the rose petals. I will never go another place with that boy again."

Father quietly came into the room and asked, "What has Junior done now?"

"He drank the water in a finger bowl at the Kelly's dinner party," exclaimed Sue.

"Why, that's nothing. When I was a boy, w---," Father began to boast.

"When you were a boy, things were different," Sue remarked.

The clock struck five, and Sue popped out of the chair and flew up the stairs. All that the surprised mother could say was, "Sue, where are you going in such a big hurry?"

"I forgot to tell you that I'm going out with Tom tonight," answered Sue.

"But, dear, I thought he was the fellow who purposely bumped your arm and made you spill ink all over your essay," Mother replied.

"He did, but that is what makes him exciting. You never know what he is going to do," exclaimed Sue with a smile.

IRIS CHARVAT, Decatur High School, '58  
Helen Stapp, teacher

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## PRELUDE TO BEAUTY

I had no idea for what purpose she had come, or how long she would stay. I knew only that the sight of her delighted me tremendously. From the first she appealed to me as no other mature woman had done. She was a striking woman, forceful without hauteur, and when she relaxed at her desk, I saw that she was beautiful without beauty.

She did not review the dull lessons of our former teacher, but offered us a project of fascinating proportions. She was a craftsman, I said to myself, who loved her craft.

She asked us to write of our birthplaces. Ashamed of the fact that mine was a farmhouse, I wrote of Myrtle Point, a town in which my grandparents lived. For thirty minutes she watched us impersonally, while pens scratched feverishly at twenty desks. Of the papers she read, mine, which had never pleased any other

teacher, she praised for an eloquence prompted only by a loving heart and a pair of observant eyes.

It was the first praise I had had since I entered a graded school. But it was compensation enough for the shabby dress, tight braids of hair, coarse stockings, and thick shoes which were right enough for little girls but not good enough for young ladies who wanted the favor of their teachers and the respect of their classmates. Such a windfall of approval made me eager to do another theme for this remarkable teacher. I resolved to do something even better and more elegant than "My Birthplace." Before going to bed that night I had ready my new theme, "Our Farmhouse at Sundown."

In the morning, so eager was I to return to school, I awakened before daybreak. Although I felt too grown-up for such a juvenile costume, Mother insisted that I wear my blue rubberized raincape and storm rubbers. I reached the schoolhouse before the doors were unlocked, but protected my theme from the gusty rain by waiting in the play-shed.

The janitor and two of my classmates approached this shelter. "I suppose you youngsters know your teacher was killed on her way to school this morning." With his long-handled rake the janitor prodded a shelf of sodden leaves.

"Not Miss Rigdon?" I murmured.

"Yes." More prodding of leaves. More gusts of rain on the play-shed roof. "A car got her, an ottermobile."

In common with all desolate figures, I asked only to be left to myself. After school, I eluded Bertha and Jean in order to walk home alone.

As I pushed toward the west, I left the last mist of rain behind. Standing on the summit of Reservoir Hill, I saw the cup-like valley fill up with a golden light, the overflow of which touched my very feet and glossed with gold my rubbers and the hem of my raincape. I began to descend the hill, finding every blade of grass, every thread-bare leaf filmed with a rainbow. I looked at the sky and could not describe it. Yet over the wooden bridge into our barnyard I saw the colored vapors drift and assemble until a frail cathedral of light had risen straight above the lower pasture bars. I swallowed audibly. This was sorrow. This was grief. This was the pain of a beauty too great to bear.

I thought to myself—the artisans of heaven are building a mansion for one that I love.



It surprised me to recall how brief a time I had known Miss Rigdon. Yet in one day I was certain that I had made and lost a friend.

As the sky darkened and the cathedral melted into blackness, my raincape rustled around my ankles. In my heart were two forebodings: I must hurry; I must reach home before the storm. I repeated to myself the beautiful words which I had discovered: the artisans of heaven are building a mansion for one that I love. I liked the sound of them, but I didn't know why. In a short time I would repeat them to my mother. If they were beautiful, she would know.

But when I reached home, Mother was plucking clothes from the line—muslin underwear, billowing nightgowns, sheets, pillow cases, tablecloths.

"Hurry and help me," she directed, "before it rains."

I wanted to tell her about the cathedral, about the death of Miss Rigdon, but I couldn't speak. Perhaps she would laugh if I said I had just seen the artisans of heaven building a mansion for someone I loved.

I was just a bit suspicious of the words myself. Mere words shouldn't give one such an unreasonable joy. But I loved them—oh how I loved them! That night, until I went to sleep, I held those words in my mouth like a bread of some strange communion. Finally, long after the house was still, I choked on the fumes of a sulphur match, lifted a yawning lamp chimney, and with shaking hand scrawled softly in my school notebook: Today I watched the artisans of heaven build a mansion for one I love.

MARGIE TODD, Rockford East H. S., '56  
Adele Johnson, teacher

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### SOMEONE SPECIAL

Carmitta stood in the hall. Her knees shook, and her lips trembled. She could hardly believe it. She had a date to the prom! Not just any date, but one with Larry Anderson, the most popular boy in school.

She almost pinched herself to make sure she wasn't dreaming. Her big brown eyes got bigger. She tried not to sound too anxious as she said, "I'd-I'd love to go with you."

"Good, I'll call you later about the time and all that mess." Then with two long strides he caught up with his friends.

Carmitta, still believing that she had been dreaming, picked up her books and floated out of the building.

All the way home, through the busy streets, past the crowds of people, she kept marveling at the fact that Larry had really asked her. She must have a new dress. Yes, a yellow one. Yellow would bring out her dark hair and brown eyes. It must be a completely American dress.

At the last thought she grew cold. Larry mustn't meet her family. Oh, not that she didn't have the most wonderful parents in the world, but they just didn't act American. Mama always wore big skirts and Mexican blouses. She had dark hair braided up on top of her head and a strong Mexican accent. Papa, of course, acted more American since he met many people where he worked. But he still had an accent. No, she wasn't ashamed of her parents, but she had tried so hard to be an American, and she didn't want Larry to know her background now.

Carmitta threw her books down on the couch. She could hear Mama humming as she prepared supper for the family. She went into the kitchen to tell Mama about her date. "Mama, Mama, guess what! I've got a date for the prom."

Mama looked up, "Well—why not, you are pretty, no? Why should not you have, what you call, date?" Her big earrings bobbed.

"Mama, I must have a new dress," Carmitta begged.

Mama's broad grin faded. "But Carmitta, we have no money for dress." She shook her head sadly. "No I can not get you dress," Tears swelled up in Carmitta's eyes. Mama, seeing them promptly smiled. "Carmitta, my baby, don't cry. I make you dress from cloth I got from Mexico."

Carmitta's face brightened, but only for a moment. She wanted an American dress, not a Mexican one. She kissed her mother and ran to her room. She threw herself across her bed. Her eyes filled with tears. She just couldn't go dressed like a Mexican. Carmitta got up and looked in the mirror. She was pretty. Yes, you might say beautiful. Her dark hair was long and black, her dark eyes usually danced with excitement. Sure, she was pretty, but what popular boy would be caught dead with a Mexican; or at least one dressed in Mexican clothes? She got up determined to hide the way she felt and went down to help Mama fix supper.

For the next few days Carmitta avoided Larry. Several times she tried to get up courage enough to tell him she wouldn't be able to go, but each time she just couldn't.

Mama had been working hard on the dress. It was yellow with blue sombreros embroidered in it. It had a full skirt and was an off the shoulder affair. Yes, it was pretty, but somehow it just didn't look very American. She just couldn't disappoint Mama.

The evening of the dance came. Carmitta had on her new dress and blue shoes. She really looked nice, but she just couldn't go to the prom wearing a Mexican dress.

She heard the doorbell ring and started down the stairs. She hadn't intended for Larry to meet her parents, but what was the use now? Larry would know that she was a Mexican anyway. She walked slowly down the stairs. When Larry saw her he smiled. Carmitta thought bitterly that he was already making fun of her. Oh well, five minutes and it would all be over.

They told her parents goodby and started down the walk. Carmitta looked up at Larry. He was so cute in a tall, blond, American way. Well, he had been hers to dream about for a whole week. She took a deep breath and said in a rush of words, "Larry, you don't have to take me to the prom. Just leave me at a movie. I know you don't want to be seen with a Mexican." Her voice filled with sobs.

Larry looked down in surprise. A smile tugged at his lips. "Carmitta I want to take you to the prom. Do you think I would have asked you if I didn't? If I'd wanted to take someone else I'd have asked someone else. But I wanted to take 'someone special' so I asked you." He shyly took hold of her hand.

Carmitta looked up at Larry unbelieving. Then she saw that he was serious. He meant it! Her heart suddenly did flip-flops. Larry yes Larry, had called her "someone special!"

BRENDA MATHIS. Decatur H. S., '58  
Marilynn Hagebush, teacher

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## A PAIR OF SKIS

As she entered the dimly-lit, overcrowded room of the "Bargain Shop," the slim blonde had a momentary doubt that her hunch about purchasing a good pair of skis cheap would be right.



Then she saw them—a beautiful, newly painted pair of skis, and they even had metal edges. The shopkeeper was asking a high price for a pair like that, but the young ski-enthusiast brought him down to the more reasonable price of \$25.

The grin on Sue's face as she tried out her "find" a week later in preparation for the coming Senior Girls' Downhill Race was enough to convince even the most doubtful that she had bought a real bargain.

Race-day blew in on a flurry of fresh snow, making the conditions for the race perfect. Laughter and chatter filled the warming-house as the contestants checked their equipment for the race, while their friends kidded and joked with them. "... hear about Sue's new skis? ... got them for a song ... don't forget your mittens this time ... pretty good, she says ... where are my ..."

A loudspeaker suddenly blared through the din, sending skiers and spectators alike out into the biting air for the start of the races. The spectators crowded around the finish gate as the skiers rode the tow to the top of the run.

There was an expectant hush as the first contestant appeared at the crest of the hill. A minute later the second girl showed, then another, and another. The first girl had already "christied" through the finish gate, when suddenly one of the skiers lurched, lost her balance, and fell in a swirl of arms, legs, snow, and skis.

The girl behind her stopped by her for a moment, then flew down the course, arriving breathless at the bottom. "It's Sue," she panted. "She hit a bump, and her right ski split right down the side. She broke her leg, she thinks. Hurry!"

"... that's a bargain for you ... never buy skis at ... a broken leg into the bargain. . ."

SANDY DICKSON, Evanston Twp. H. S., '56  
Mary L. Taft, teacher

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### "I WEPT BECAUSE I HAD NO SHOES"

I sat there alone. All around me I could see and hear the other girls, some giving, some receiving congratulations. I just sat there. I was part of the total number of girls, but that was all. The real me was set off from the rest by an actual wall of resentment and hurt. Sitting there in this sort of semi-coma, I slowly began to piece together the fragments of the day.

In the morning I had risen with that feeling of "something good is going to happen to me today." I had dressed with unusual care. When I went down to breakfast my mother had told me not to worry; everything would be fine.

"I'm so sorry," a voice interrupted my thoughts. "I know how you feel."

Does she? Does she really know the feeling I have right now? I began to wonder. Then slowly my thoughts returned to the same channel.

I had arrived at school fairly early and had, as usual, gone to Alice's desk to talk with her. After awhile Judy had come over. It was a strained meeting, for we all had known that only two of us would . . . . .

"Oh, thank you," I heard Alice's voice say. The babbling and murmuring sounded very far away, as if in an entirely different room.

My thoughts returned again. The assembly period had crawled by. The three of us had stood when our names were called, and everyone had written two names on a piece of paper. Nothing more, just two names.

Some voice from that other room was talking to me. I sat bolt upright as my thoughts faded and reality dawned.

"We should go now," It was my best friend, Sue, who spoke. She had won that morning in her homeroom.

"Congratulations, Sue," I said mechanically, although I tried to put feeling into it.

"Oh, thanks," was the reply. "I'm sorry about you."

Are you? You don't know what I'm going through, I thought. "I'll live," I said.

On the way home I came face to face with Judy. "Here," Judy said, "take a flower from my corsage."

"No, thanks," I said and walked on.

When I arrived home, I saw mother sewing in the dining room. "I didn't win, Mom. I didn't get it." I was startled to feel tears pouring down my cheeks. The tears turned to sobs.

"It's all right; there will be other times," I heard Mom's voice say.

That night when I was in bed and everything was quiet, I had a chance to think. But my tears kept getting in the way and confusing my thoughts. Why? Why? Please tell me why. I've lost all the big things I've ever really wanted or hoped for. Why?

The answer did not come. Instead one sentence came into my mind and broke the tears and banished my helpless feeling.

Since then I have lost other offices and had other big disappointments, but I've learned not to cry. I've learned to make myself think of all the people who are much less fortunate than I. I think of that sentence that came to me in the quiet night: "I wept because I had no shoes, and then I met a man who had no feet."

EMILY MOTT-SMITH, Evanston Twp. H. S., '58  
Edith L. Baumann, teacher

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### THE PEOPLE VERSUS

"All right, prosecutor, you may call your witness."

"Yes, Your Honor."

"What is your name, young man?"

"Glen Bard, sir."

"I see, and what is your occupation?"

"I go to that school up there on the hill."

"Oh, yes, that's the school filled with those gangs and hoodlums we've been reading about, isn't it?"

"Er . . . yes, sir."

"Hmm. What kind of student are you, Glen?"

"Oh, about average. I got on the honor roll once."

"Oh? And are you active socially?"

"I get along with most of my classmates, sir. I belong to one or two clubs in the school, have several hobbies at home."

"Hmm. I don't remember seeing you around, son."

"Oh, I beg your pardon, sir, but you probably have. You might have seen me walking down the hill with my arms full of books at about three o'clock every day. Maybe you saw me at the show last Friday with my girl . . . and I always sat in the tenth row at the basketball games last winter."

"If you've ever been to any of our convocations, sir, I was the kid caught in the big traffic jam in the hall, and I was in a few convos myself. Er . . . you probably saw me once in detention hall, but I haven't been there much. And you must have seen me in Miss Trowbridge's lab or coming out of the 'Pinnacle' Room on the 600 floor."



"You've probably heard me clang my locker after school, sir, and I monitored once or twice in the halls. I was on the football team one year, and my girl friend is in G. A. A. Oh, I know! Maybe you saw me decorating the gym for one of the dances, or selling taffy apples at the game with Hinsdale. You must have seen me, sir. I've been around the school a lot."

"Well, son . . . to tell you the truth, I only know you from the newspapers recently . . ."

"Then you don't know me very well, sir."

"Er . . . you say you've done all these things?"

"Yes, sir."

"But the newspapers . . ."

"I know about the newspapers, sir."

"Uhh . . . I see you brought along quite a few of your friends to the courtroom."

"Yes, sir. About sixteen hundred, sir."

"What would you say about them, son?"

"Well, they're pretty much like I am, sir."

"They are? But where are these people that I read about in the papers that are so bad . . . ?"

"I don't know, sir. When I walk through the halls at school, sir, I never seem to see them around. I see Mary Jones helping out in the cafeteria and John Smith talking to Ray, the janitor. I see Jane Brown typing in the office and her friend Sally walking around to all the rooms collecting the absence slips. But I never seem to see these other people around much."

"But . . . er, why do you suppose you never see them, when they get their names in the papers and all?"

"I don't know, sir. It's probably because there are so many other people in front of them. It's hard to see them through so many Marys and Sallys and Johns."

"Uhh . . . yes, I see. I'm finished . . . Your Honor. Would the defense care to cross-examine the witness?"

"No cross-examination, Your Honor. The defense rests."

STEWART ALLEN, Glenbard Township H. S., Glen Ellyn, '56  
Helen McConnell, teacher

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### MIXED EMOTIONS

Not being an exceptional judge of personalities, I am often puzzled by the actions of some people. Strangely, though, one of

the hardest persons to figure out is one with whom I have lived all my life, my twin sister. Perhaps it is characteristic of all sisters to say, "Don't go out with her; I don't like her!" Or maybe it is characteristic to say, "Thomas, you can't wear your white bucks to the prom!" I wouldn't mind these criticisms if she were consistent in her moods, but apparently that's too much to ask of any woman. It amuses me to note the change from the above mood to, "Tom, dear, may I copy your plane geometry?"

I still have faith in my belief that some day I will do something of which she approves. Very often I am greeted at the dinner table by my mother's inquisitive remark, "Thomas, what's this I hear about your behavior at school this morning?" I am always in a quandary as to how she gets this information. I am beginning to suspect that the informer is the same person who says, after I have just blasted her, "Mother, you should have seen your son at Bracken's last night; it was disgraceful!"

There are times, though, when I am thankful that I have a sister my own age. I can remember sitting together in the living room at three-thirty in the morning after a big dance, reviewing the evening's experiences, which will soon become mere memories. She sat there with stars in her eyes, gazing nowhere, oblivious of my yawns.

In no other person can there exist the opinions that I am sickening and conceited, but that, nevertheless, I am the world's most wonderful brother.

TOM SHILGALIS, Kewanee H. S., '56  
Eleanor Johnson, teacher

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### A CHRISTMAS STORY

"'Twas the night before Christmas when all through the house . . ."

You say you're never home for Christmas? Well, we'll have to revise that a little bit.

"'Twas the night before Christmas when all through Aunt Mabel's house, not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse . . ."  
Aunt Mabel doesn't have mice? Well . . .

"'Twas the night before Christmas when all through Aunt Mabel's house not a creature was stirring, not even a dog . . ."

No dogs either? What then? Okay . . .

"'Twas the night before Christmas when all through Aunt Mabel's house, not a creature was stirring, not even a parakeet; the stockings were hung by the chimney with care . . ."

Oh, no! Aunt Mabel doesn't have a chimney? This is the most difficult poem I've ever tried to recite! If at once you don't succeed, try, try again.

"'Twas the night before Christmas when all through Aunt Mabel's house, not a creature was stirring, not even a parakeet; the stockings were hung on the clothes rack with care . . ."

I know it doesn't rhyme! You're the one who keeps contradicting me! Well, anyway, the last line can't be changed:

"Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good night!"

FAYE RICE, Marengo H. S., '58  
Helen Staubli Tipps, teacher

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## LIGHTS

The Lord said, "Let there be light," and there was light and it was good.

Light has always been a decisive ingredient in the progress of mankind, physically as well as mentally. In primitive days when the sun set, man's work was done. With the discovery of fire, his day was lengthened and his capabilities grew. When he put fire to more practical use in the candle, his day was prolonged still further and more safely. From the candlelight, kerosene lamps ensued. During this era the old lamplighter was a familiar sight lighting street lamps in old New England towns. Science progressed with Edison's invention of the incandescent bulb. All the many years of trial and error, of hardship and discovery were wrapped up in this shining glass. We have come from incandescence to fluorescence, to neon and finally even to daylight savings.

As the physical aspects of light developed, the possibilities for teaching also grew. Education began way back when man was created, and as the ages went by, languages developed, the printing press was invented, and people had opportunities for learning and for the development of their own personalities as light awakened their minds.

People can be compared to lights—some hide their lights under a bushel, muting their talents; some shine forth like a beacon lead-



ing others forward; some are like a blinker—on and off, on and off, seeming to say, "Look at me, look at me!"; some are neon lights with a showy front but in reality very small; some are like fires—flaring up only to die again; others are steady, secure light of the moon—always present and ever true.

The type of light we are is related to the illumination not only of our minds but also of our hearts and souls. It is in our hearts that real understanding is bred and it is through this understanding that friendships grow to sparkle and shine throughout the world. It is the light of friendship, of goodness, of truth in our hearts that betters and builds our country and our homes. If we have not the faith and peace in hearts and souls that come from the real Light, the Christ, we shall wander alone without footprints to follow through a dense and dark existence.

But lights are also inspirational—the soft glow of Christmas tree bulbs, the cool glimmer of a starlit night, the lantern in the window ahead—a lone light in a pitch-dark night, the reassuring shine of a flashlight coming to aid one who is lost, the security of a little night-light in a fearful child's room, and one lone candle beaming brightly on the simple altar of a little darkened church. These lights come from the love which makes men happy. For love is a light—sometimes a glaring torch, sometimes a quiet, ever-burning candle. Love is a light that envelops all traits, good and bad. Love makes everything seem beautiful as if all were bathed in early morning sunlight, sparkling with dewdrops.

Light means different things to different people—to the blind, physical lumination is nothing, but inner light means everything; to the fugitive it is a fearful presence in which all is seen; to the little child sunlight is a glorious thing making his little world glitter and shine, and the mental beams are to him something new and exciting which he is eager to explore.

A beautiful, sunshiny day can dispel the deepest gloom from the mind and leave in its place joy and happiness, wonder and glory at the sight of such resplendence. For as Emerson has said, "Light is the first of painters." Anyone who has seen the blush of a sunset or the reflection of the moon on a lake has been awed by the natural beauties revealed by God's great lights.

The lights of the world—physical, mental and spiritual—all these were born when the Lord said, "Let there be light."

GRETCHEN HOLM, Moline Senior H. S., '56  
Barbara Garst, teacher

## THE HAPPIEST YEARS OF MY LIFE

About the only subject that all parents of all high school students seem to agree upon is that "the happiest years of your life are spent in high school."

As I look around, I'm convinced that I've had my share of fun. I've never missed a game. I usually make the school dances, and I've had plenty of telephone calls.

But because I'm still in high school I'm considered "too reckless" to use the car, "too busy" with homework to earn spending money, "too tired" to see late TV programs and "too young" to go out on Sunday nights.

Sometimes when I get disgusted with all the restrictions that are put upon me because I'm still in high school, I say to myself, "Thank goodness, the happiest years of my life are about over."

JUDITH JONES, Moline Senior H. S., '56  
Clara Carlson, teacher

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## A TOAST TO THE "DRINKERS OF THE WIND"

Poetry in motion! That is the Arabian horse. Through a windswept desert my grey mare sweeps with head high and tail streaming behind. Spirit is reflected in every inch of her body. Suddenly she halts, wheels, and stands on the highest dune. Proudly she waits, drinking the wind through nostrils dilated to the size of teacups. Her eyes, which are set low, flash defiantly as if she were waiting for someone to challenge her. Impatiently, with body quivering, she paws the sand. Then delighted with the turmoil she has caused, she once again flows into unbroken motion, leaving me with only memories of her equine elegance.

She returns. This time she is in the fleeting waves of the gigantic ocean. Rearing, neighing, reeling, playing, she delights in her stampede of the waves. Each white-cap forms a vivid portrayal of an Arab, the white charger of the sea. Then she is gone with the tide.

Upward, upward she draws herself until the sun's rays make her radiant. The clouds are her home. The small versatile body becomes enveloped in the mist. No longer is she a satin-like grey. She is the purest of whites. Spilling over the clouds she makes her way earthward. The roll of the thunder is her band of Arabs. It becomes more furious as they draw nearer. Hoofbeats, hoof-

beats, then at last—the rain, peaceful, soothing. A raindrop awakens me from my imaginary escapade into the realism of the day.

Yes, my Arabian horse is still a dream, but some day I will feel her glossy flesh against my knees, and I will ride into reality on my own, true “Drinker of the Wind.”

SANDRA ADAMS, Moline Senior H. S., '57  
Robert D. Knees, teacher

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### VIEWER'S INTERLUDE

Four or five years ago you could spot a television commercial in the making. Now, though, there are some cases where the commercial is linked so well with the program or is tossed in so quickly that it is almost impossible to evade it. We still have the long-drawn-out ones, but most viewers are experienced enough so that they can approximate the length of them almost to the second. This enables them to switch to another channel or have something to eat or amuse themselves with a game of solitaire during the intermission. They have conquered the disgusting issue of listening to the sponsors representative give his grueling oration on how good the product is and why everyone should have a dozen of it. This is usually followed by the “well satisfied” customer uttering “in his own words” a monotone of memorized lines telling how magnificently the product does everything it was advertised to do, and more.

The newer type ads are those that are quickly imposed in the program. These we see constantly in the form of spot interviews of celebrities, cartoons, songs, and family gatherings. They are often connected so closely with the program by a joke or anecdote or dramatic incident that many of them are actually seen by surprised viewers whose reflexes are slow. The producers have got away from advertising the fact that the intermission is about due. Now, many times they either try to sneak it in or dare the viewer to keep watching.

Many people claim they do not like the television commercials. I wonder if they ever thought how it would be to have a program without any intermissions. Do they ever think of how much they really look forward to those moments when they can enjoy a snack, some rest, or simply conversation? Much of the pleasure a



person receives by watching a program is in being able to comment about it to someone else. These intermissions offer an interlude for viewers to exchange opinions, criticisms, and personal reactions and preferences.

I think that these advertisements actually make the television program more enjoyable, and I do not think that they will ever be completely discontinued as some of the television's head men predict.

JIM MURPHY, Naperville Comm. H. S., '57  
Dorothy Scroggie, teacher

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### THE HUNT

I never knew how still the north woods could be at sunrise. Its intense silence was interrupted only by the crackling of breaking twigs as I gingerly worked myself over to a group of small trees that formed a blind. Upon reaching them, I nervously checked my equipment and then waited. For hours, it seemed, I waited there, moving no more than the branches about me, as my mind drifted off to a thousand things. Suddenly I was jolted from my daydreams back to reality. Two does and a buck were approaching from a clump of trees. Trembling and nervous, I got into position for the shot. Not twenty feet away, the buck stopped and put his nose to the wind. It was now or never, and I knew it! Centering the buck in my sight, I clicked the shutter on my camera. At long last the hunt was over!

ART KIDDER, Naperville Comm. H. S., '56  
Leona McBride, teacher

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### THE CIRCLE

Nothing continues indefinitely—that is, nothing except a circle and washing dishes. They stand like mountains of glass waiting to be climbed—mountains without the challenge, just the work. First, there are brightly-colored glasses that stand out like purple squares on a chessboard. There are forks like long fingers, grasping vainly for what is theirs. (They inevitably lose the battle with the strong soap, as do my hands.) The spoons give in easily, while the knives don't even attempt to fight back. The worst comes last—the pans, black fortresses of grease. They, too, are ready for battle, standing like medieval castles.

This is too much. Some day I shall sling them against the wall and end their defiant lives. I shall buy paper plates.

LINDA RADLEY, PEORIA H. S., '56  
Emily Rice, teacher

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### A SCENE THAT WILL NOT BE FORGOTTEN

It was a bright, sunny, clear day, when I first saw Mount Rushmore gently nestled in the Black Hills. As I stood at a distance, the sun flickered on the small, transparent, crystal pebbles near the four faces, Washington, Lincoln, Jefferson, and Roosevelt. It seemed that each of the neatly carved stone images was alive and had a special message of its own.

Around the Mount were beautiful, tall, slender fir trees reaching upwards toward the stones, adding their air of distinction to the wonderful sight. As the wind blew through their branches, it seemed as if they, too, were nodding their thankfulness to these great men who stood for a free America.

JUDY REAM, East Rockford Sr. H. S., '58  
Edna Youngquist, teacher

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### IT'S MORE FUN THIS WAY

An evident parking problem does exist in this area, but aside from causing snarled traffic and some pretty shocking displays of vocabulary, it has its advantages. It brings out the strategist in us. It gives the motoring public a chance to match wits, and to compete on common ground for one goal: namely, that parking place on the other side of a four-lane street.

Picture this tense situation: for fifteen minutes you and a dozen other cars have been circulating in the lanes of a municipal parking lot watching for the tell-tale puff of exhaust announcing the departure of a meter holder. Suddenly a pedestrian enters the lot. You see him take out his car keys and head down the walk. Trying hard not to assume the expression of a man just dealt a full house, you drive along beside him, hoping the other drivers don't spot the prospect.

A yellow and brown Mercury draws out of the pack and sneaks up behind you. You turn around momentarily in an at-

tempt to bluff the contender with a withering scowl. The yellow and brown Mercury stops. Satisfied, you continue. Then you notice the man with the keys is no longer beside you. The prospective parking place has walked away. Looking back, you see the yellow and brown Mercury backing into a parking place just vacated by the man you were scouting.

Vengeance is finally yours, for it seems your rival gets confused by the angle at which the cars are parked, puts his last nickel in the wrong meter, and is forced to relinquish the spot to you on your next time around.

Now, can't you see the great satisfaction in an experience like this? This is why I say—don't add any more parking spaces. It's more fun this way.

SALLY INGOLD, Rock Island Senior H. S., '57  
Virginia Harrod, teacher

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### AN ANGLER'S WORLD

The place is the proverbial "land of sky blue waters." The time is high noon in the heart of summer. It's hot, but a refreshing breeze cascades through the pines. Out on the lake you can see one boat besides yours. It's a lazy day, and you fit right into it. You lounge back and listen to the monotonous din of the motor.

Suddenly, your rod dips; you're snagged. No, it's a fish and immediately you tense up and every nerve becomes alert. By the feel you can tell it's a big one. You give him line as he sounds and you wonder if you can horse him up to the boat. Your mind tells your hands to reel, but your hands won't obey. Sweat pours down your face in little beads and tickles your neck as it streams to your belt. You're tired, but, finally, the huge fish emerges. What a monster! You've just got to get this one in the boat.

All this time brother has been maneuvering the boat and now he springs into action, shouting orders like an admiral. Man! you're glad he's a "take charge guy." "Reel him in a hair closer," he yells, and you fight to obey. He dips the net under the surface, trying to get the fish's big snout down in the bottom of the twines. It won't work. He's too big. It just lies across the mouth of the net like a board. Then with a graceful twist it dives into the warm water, your line singing after it. Disheartened, you thumb the reel frantically to stop its plunge. Success. He's coming back up.



This time he just lies there as if horribly bored with the whole thing. The longer you look at him the bigger he gets. Out of the corner of your eye you see your brother throw down his little net and inch toward the fish with outstretched hand. Instantly you know your brother is going to use the old Indian trick of grabbing the fish by the eyes. It works, but only for a second. With a beautifully executed flip, the prize is gone.

For a long moment you are too limp to say anything. Your mind searches for words but none come. Your brother gives off with a long volley of meaningless words and you weakly join in with him. It's all over now, and somehow you can't help admiring the tenacious way that fish hang on to freedom.

JIM BAKER, Rock Island Alleman H. S., '56  
Sister Louise, O. S. B., teacher

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### DIGITE ILLUM INSANTEM MAGISTERUM!

"Dumb freshmen!" What a welcome for a room full of prospective Latin students, who also had the distinction of being poor, bewildered cooties, petrified at the very thought of their first day in high school. "My heavens!" I wondered, "What kind of teacher is this?" This, as I soon found out, was Miss Blatt; in addition to a Latin teacher, a staunch cootie hater. In her estimation, the lowest form of animal life on this earth was a freshman. They were the dumbest, slowest, dullest, and most stupid things in existence, and nothing could change her mind.

So began my first year in high school. Latin soon became my favorite subject. This wasn't because of any extraordinary liking for Latin, but because of Miss Blatt. Sitting at her desk in her plain blue dress, scratching her gray head, and chewing the end of her pencil, Miss Blatt appeared quite harmless, but looks can be deceiving. As time passed I began to wonder if she lay awake nights thinking of new names to call her classes. Besides being dumb freshmen, we also had the honor of being "vegetables." This word was said with utter contempt, and it didn't take much thought to come to the conclusion that whatever a "vegetable" was, it wasn't very good. Finally we realized that only one fate awaited a "vegetable," that of digging post holes. And just how low can one get? We were living in a dream world of Santa Claus, the

good fairies, and Aunt Sadie's new Easter hat. It was time to wake up.

Soon we found ourselves in the midst of a race with the other Latin classes. It was apparent that glory rested with the class who could finish the book first. It was touch and go for a while, but we finally emerged victorious, much to the delight of our teacher.

In addition to her dislike of freshmen in general and "vegetables" in particular, one of Miss Blatt's greatest trials was office bulletins. The bulletins came pouring forth from the principal's office at the rate of about three per week. Like the postmen, neither rain nor sleet nor hail could stop those bulletins. Since it was the duty of all teachers to read their missives to their first hour classes, we had the privilege of hearing them from Miss Blatt. As the bulletins mounted higher and higher on her desk, her temper rose right along with them, until one day we heard a beautiful rendition of a bulletin on assembly behavior—all in German. Of course no one understood a word said, but it served its purpose.

However, through all our trials and tribulations, I got the impression Miss Blatt, like the proverbial dog, had a bark worse than her bite. I never could quite understand why she tried to impress us with her sternness. Maybe she thought that if people saw her as she really was, they would take advantage of her. I don't know what it was, but I do know that when the time for summer vacation drew near, I was a little sad at leaving her class. Even if I would always be a "vegetable," my greatest desire was to have Miss Blatt for second year Latin.

As vacation drew to a close, the thoughts of school filled me with excitement. How wonderful it would be to go back to school, not as a lowly freshman, but as a sophisticated sophomore—not an upper classman yet, but at least a step in that direction. When the great day arrived, I hurried to school, filled with anticipation. My first period class was Latin with Miss Blatt, and I could hardly wait for the 8:25 bell to ring. Finally it did! As we filed into the room, we were strangely silent, not knowing why, but quiet anyway. There sat Miss Blatt! After a minute or two she raised her eyes from the desk, looked slowly around the room, and, in her most sarcastic tone, muttered, "Dumb sophomores!"

PAT BAUMGARDNER, Springfield H. S., '57  
Lois Body, teacher

### WHEN THE STORES STAY OPEN

Downtown Sterling on Monday night is a teen-age social playground. In fact, it becomes an actual hunting ground for date-hungry girls and girl-conscious boys. By six-thirty, all girls intending to go downtown are on their way, wearing heavy sweat shirts and blue jeans, or Bermuda shorts and knee socks. Allowing the girls a head start, the boys arrive on the scene either by foot or chrome-plated chariot. The girls, after wandering half-heartedly through a few stores, soon decide to stop for a Coke. By eight, the booths and counter stools in Goshert's are filled with blue-jeaned girls who are trying not to notice the boys, and yet observe every move made by a male. The sidewalk outside the soda fountain is occupied by boys wearing sloppy shirts, beltless jeans, and assumed looks of nonchalance. They are obviously not deliberately waiting for the girls; they just happen to be outside this store. Finally, with much laughter and loud talk, the girls leave Goshert's and walk the streets until some young Casanova offers them a ride. This is Monday night in downtown Sterling. It is not a shopping night of solemn business transactions, but rather a night of gay sparkle for teen-agers who have done nothing, but had a wonderful time.

GEORGIA WADSWORTH, Sterling Twp. H. S., '56  
Marie Dickson, teacher

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### OH! TO LEAD A DOG'S LIFE

Have you ever heard the expression, I live a dog's life? Well, believe me, brother, I'd give my two front teeth to do just that!

My name is Elizabeth. Elizabeth may be a pretty name for a girl, but not for me. Oh don't get me wrong, I'm a girl all right but I'm also a dog! You can imagine how my dog friends laugh when they hear my mistress call "Oh, Elizabeth." I just about die of embarrassment. Why couldn't I be just plain Rover, Spot, Blackie, Queenie or Lady?

My mistress insists that I be treated as a member of the family from the name on down. So, you see I live the life of a human, and hate it. No dog food for me. I dine on soup, salad, potatoes and steak. That's fine for people, but not for me. I have a wardrobe that would make a movie star envious. It consists of dresses, coats and even hats. The item I hate the worst though is a big purple bow which I'm never without. I surely would love to chew it up, and I would too, if I could get hold of the thing. Then there's the bedroom. Do you think I sleep in an ordinary box or



dog house like most dogs? No, not me, I sleep in a nice specially built bed—a fine four poster job, no less! How terrible it would be if my dog friends found out about this. Why, they would never let me walk down the alley with them again! All of these things are bad, but the baby talk I get is the worst. She is constantly “Coochie-cooing” me like a real baby.

Now really, how much more do I have to take? Won't someone please trade places with me and let me live a normal dog's life?

CAROLYN OLESEN, Streator H. S., '58  
Lucille M. Tkach, teacher

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### JUST DAY-DREAMING, THANK YOU

I wonder what it was like here a hundred years ago. Prob'ly a few Indians around. What would they have looked like? I wish I had been around then, maybe even lived with them. That would have been fun. I would have seen and prob'ly met a lot of famous scouts. I might've been one myself.

Boy, I like this place. I wonder if I'll be able to come to it much. It'll be nice after school starts—but will I have time? Will the kids be wanting to come here, too? I wish I could keep this place all to myself, just a nice, cool spot to come to and dream for a while.

When I grow up, will I be able to see this spot and come to it and lie here like now? or will I find another place? I wish I could buy all the land around here for several miles. Then I would be able to have it all to myself.

What kind of bird is that? I've never heard one like it before. There's an awful lot of pretty song-birds here.

What will I be doing when I'm grown up? I wish I could work in a place like this—if you could call it work.

I wonder if I'll get a job I'll like? Is there any kind that I could get that would be working in the woods like this? I wouldn't want to be a lumberjack; I'm not cut out for that, and anyhow, I wouldn't want to be cutting down trees. I'd rather be planting them. Maybe I could be a forest ranger. I think I'd like that.

I know I'm not going to get married. At least I don't think so. I want to be able to go where I please, not to have to “Come here and wash your face,” or “Go get me that thimble, you know, the gold one,” or “Can't you keep quiet?” I'll do what I please. I'll keep as many butterflies and birds' eggs as I feel like, and on the dining room table, too!

Oh, well, I'm not that old yet, I guess I'll do well enough getting through today. Oh, rats! There goes the dinner bell. I wonder if some day I could run away. Maybe that's what I ought to do.

Holy Crow! can't give a guy two minutes, can you!

"All right, I'm coming."

WENDY BAKER, Streator H. S., '58  
Faye Homrighous, teacher

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### THE EMPTY WINDOW

I used to walk past the small frame house every morning. Whether it was fall, when the air was filled with the swishing of falling leaves, or winter when all that could be heard was the crunch of ice and snow under foot, she was there, in the window. I grew to look forward to that feeble little wave and the cheery smile she always seemed to have ready, especially for me. It never failed to make my dreariest days happier, and I always felt just a little better to know things were not so bad for me after all.

I often wondered how, confined to bed, with probably no chance of ever leaving it, she could radiate such cheer and give such a sincere meaning to life by just the mere gesture of a smile. My only answer would be that God provides some of us with that something "extra" to see us through those trying times. But it amazed me that this frail old lady should make such an effort to give some of her "extra" something to an unknown passer-by on the street.

This wordless meeting each morning continued for almost a year. Every morning she was there smiling in the window. And on the days after I had missed going by, she made an extra effort, as if to say, "I hope you're feeling better now."

But one morning, as I raised my hand almost automatically to wave, I stopped short, for the blind was drawn. No familiar smile or wave was there to greet me. As I walked on, my whole day assumed a darkened cast. I could not help wondering what had happened or if she were well. Perhaps someone had forgotten to lift the shade for her.

But, deep inside of me I knew that that was not the answer for the blind remained closed the rest of the week.

The next Monday, as I followed my usual path to school, I approached the house almost hesitantly, hoping, looking for what

I knew would not be there. Yes, the shade had been opened, but only cold emptiness greeted my anxious glance. Perhaps it was my imagination, perhaps only a stray reflection of the sun, but for a moment there seemed to be a faint glow about her window.

I still go by that small frame house each morning, and I never fail to look up to the empty window.

GAIL TUMMELSON, Urbana H. S., '56  
Marien Seward, teacher

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### TOMMY

I met Tommy while I was working as a hospital aide for the Senior Girl Scouts. My first thought when I saw him was one of pity and sympathy, for what could be more pathetic than a little boy covered with bandages and confined to a hospital bed at the age of four? But as I grew to know Tommy better, this feeling was soon lost. From the nurse's aide I learned that the bandages all over his body covered severe burns and that he was undergoing a series of skin grafts. But from Tommy himself I learned what character, personality, and courage a four-year-old can have.

He was crazy about cowboys and horses. He had a Roy Rogers hat, Gene Autry guns, and a pair of Hopalong Cassidy slippers. Each night when I would come in, he would tell me who he was that night. Sometimes it was Roy or Gene or Buffalo Bill, and finally Davy Crockett. One night I called him Buffalo Bill when he was being Davy. He glared at me and said, "I'm Davy. Remember?" I never forgot or got mixed up again.

There was a plastic Trigger bank beside his bed for the sole purpose of saving money to buy a horse. "I'm going to have the neatest horse some day," he would say, looking up at me with big brown eyes shining. "Well, anyway as soon as I get enough money saved up. But I guess that'll take an awful long time." He would usually add this last part with an innocent glance at the bank. I don't know if Tommy will get his horse, but if he does, at least a small part of it will really belong to me.

These aren't the only things I remember about Tommy. I remember the nights his usually cheery face was masked with pain. I can still feel his little hand squeezing mine when it was especially bad.

But even though he had this pain and was lonesome and homesick, I never heard Tommy complain, and one night I found out why. In the bed next to his was a little boy crying his eyes out.

Tommy looked up at me, his seriousness a sharp contrast to his young face, and said, "I don't cry like that, do it?" and seeing my nod of agreement he continued, "Do you know why? 'Cause my mommy told me I'm here because God wants me here. I don't know why, and I don't like it, but He does. And besides, cowboys don't cry." It was about then that my eyes got a suspicious glint in them, but I wasn't crying; I didn't have anything to cry about—and besides, cowgirls don't cry either.

When I left the hospital for the summer, Tommy was still there and feeling pretty bad, but I'm not too worried about him. I guess I got to know him well enough to know that he will always make out all right.

I won't be working at the hospital anymore, so chances are I may never hear about Tommy again, but I shall never forget him. One just doesn't forget friends like Tommy.

CAROLE LIES, York Community H. S., '57  
R. Warner Brown, teacher

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### HALF-TIME IN THE TEAM ROOM

The first half is over. Our team is trailing, as usual. Clad in green, which now matches their complexions, the players trot into the team room like sheep going through a narrow pass. Once inside, the boys sprawl across the floor like wet noodles. The coach resembles an enraged bull as he charges into the room, not caring on which noodle he steps. No one can lift his eyes to meet the coach's glare. It's like trying to put together the wrong ends of two magnets. Then as the weatherman lays out his map, the coach starts sketching out the next plays. To the bloodshot eyes of the players, the marks look like shorthand. The official's three raps at the door soon announce the end of half-time in the team room.

JOHN RAY, Lakeview H. S., '57  
Jean Towell, teacher

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### EVENING INTERMEZZO

The crickets and the katydids are the first to warm-up for the coming concert. At first, only a few brave souls venture to be



heard, but, by the late dusk, even the most timid are joining in the refrain. They seem almost to have a conductor who directs the group. But soon, someone fails to come in on cue, and the whole orchestra falls apart, until finally they are brought back together, and the overture begins again. The frogs add their horn and bass lines. The tiny tree-frogs sound a tentative beep, almost as if they are afraid they have no right to belong, while the bull-frogs loudly brag their confidence in their powerful tones. To be sure, the "instrumentalists" are often irregular, but the whole charm of the evening in the impromptu arrangement. Occasionally, one of the two soloists performs his numbers. The whip-poor-will enjoys most the sad serenades, while Friend Owl prefers mystery tone poems. Frequently an uninvited player, a lonesome dog, tries to fit into the group but fails to blend with the prevailing mood. However, he usually finds company, for other canines hear him and stage a long-distance conversation without means of Bell's invention. They are not exactly encouraged by the miniature musicians, but the little ones only run over their scales and hard parts, biding their time until the intruders tire of talking and say "good-bye." Then the orchestra members begin again to play "Evening Intermezzo" and reign unrivalled, through the evening.

BARB BUSCH, Mahomet H. S., '56  
Eunice Sifferd, teacher

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### HONORABLE MENTION

Bloomington: "Humans Aren't So Bad," by Richard Leonard (Lorraine Kraft); "Dutch Treat," by Prudence Price (Grace Schedel); "That Pup!" by Jan Quinn, and "Who Killed Clara?" by Carolyn Fisher (May English); "Hidden Fame," by Charlotte Burr (Maude M. Leonard).

Canton: "I'll Tell You," by Stanley Miller (Orpha Stutsman).

Carlinville: "The Box," by Mari Horky (Mary Hoyt Stoddard).

Chicago (Notre Dame H. S.): "Completion," by Jeanne Gelinas (Sister Marie St. Eleanor, S. N. D.).

Chicago (Senn H. S.): "The Young Good-by," by Carroll Lucas (Grace Lindahl).

Chicago Heights (Bloom Twp. H. S.): "Mirage," by Sue Hutton, "Steel," by Donald Slepski, "Good-by Little Girl," by Carol Kerper, "The Cat's Tale," by Carol Pankonien (Juanita L. Schoff).

- Cicero (J. Sterling Morton H. S.): "Quiet Please," by Helene Rubey, and "On Death," by Ronald W. Hurst (Paul L. Kiser); "An Amoeba Gets Weighed In," by Joseph Koucky, and "Fans," by Lois Lauber (J. Fay Anderson); "The Party," by Marilyn McDermott, "To the Corner and Back," by Shirley Widrlechner, "I Remember," by Donna Luchman, "Night Watch," by Lawrence Hale (Marjorie Diez).
- Clinton: "The Strange Visitor," by David Robinson (Louise Dickey).
- Decatur: "The Beast of Burden," by Fred McTaggart, and "A Personal Essay," by Tone-Mette Kierulf (Helen Gorham); "Brother within the Ropes," by Frank Hicks, and "The Unforgettable Laugh," by Joan Vaughn (Helen Stapp); "Long Remembered," by David E. Anderson, and "Such Is Life," by James H. Norvell (Velma A. Ogg).
- Decatur (Centennial J. H. S.): "Loyalty—Temptation," by Keith Pinkerton (Helen Hunsinger).
- East St. Louis: "Time," by Richard Seres (Marie Ginzel).
- Elmhurst (York Comm. H. S.): "The King's Contest or Why the Moon Is Made of Green Cheese," by Sheila Tillotson (Eleanor A. Davis).
- Evanston: "Street Noises," by Ken Gilchrist, and "Bargain Week Comes Once a Year," by Howard Norman Larsen (Mary L. Taft); "Marksmanship," by William Strauss, and "The Dunes" by Sheila Walsh (Frances Rouse); "The Crush," by Judy Kegan (Charlotte Whittaker); "One Summer Night," by David Johnson (Mildred Hudson).
- Fairfield: "Thanksgiving," by Kathleen Childers (Corine Jessop).
- Franklin: "In a World of Silence," by Mary L. Wells (M. Ruth Tulpin).
- Galva: "Eating," by Roger Beeler, and "Here We Go to the Ball Game," by Marcia Wheelhouse (Mildred Lapan).
- Genoa (Genoa-Kingston): "The Monster," by Carol Lee Welter, "Susie Snowflake," by Janet Suddeth, and "Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea," by Paul Malven (Gladys Wibking).
- Joliet: "How to Flunk a Test," by Jay Watson, and "Home Life," by Karen Dean (Miriam Manchester).
- Kirkland (Hiawatha Comm. Unit No. 426): "Life with the Petersons in the Past, Present, and Future," by Marilyn Peterson (Marian G. Hake).
- Marengo: "A Day Dreamer," by James Graff, and "Laughter," by Charles Shriver (Helen Staubli Tipps).



- Moline: "Spring," by Kathryn Johansen (Robert D. Knees); "Prejudice and the Yankees," by Diane Fries (Miss Roseburg); "Trouble on the Highway," by Mimi Graham (Bess Barnett); "Eternal Peace," by Sally Walters (Clara Carlson).
- Naperville: "Adventures of a Pedaler," by Boyd Berry (Dorothy Scroggie); "Outboard Slalom," and "Sunset Over the Gulf," by Rod Stiefbold (Laura Wolverton).
- Normal (University H. S.): "Two Young Loves," by Bill McMullen (Ruth Stroud); "Spring Fever," by George Barford, and "The Coomer Cats," by Sheila Coomer (Grace Hiler).
- Ottawa: "His City," by David Irish (Vernon Adams).
- Park Ridge (Maine Twp. H. S.): "Oh, Worship the King," by Diane Hoof (Paulene M. Yates); "Pink Or Blue?" by Nedra Jean Helm (Addie Hochstrasser); "Great in the Hearts of the Young," by Gail Novak (Anne Lauterbach); "Korean Christmas," by Virginia Riser (Paulene M. Yates).
- Peoria: "The Boston Rocker," by Martha King, "Creator of Fear," by Neal Harman, and "Transition," by Betty Wall (Emily E. Rice).
- Rock Island (Alleman H. S.): "El Regale Más Rico," by Verna Carey; "The Long Awaited Moment," by Jim Baker (Sister Louise, O. S. B.); "Home for Christmas," by Bill Currey (Sister Loyola).
- Rockford (West): "Difference," by Margaret Sweeney (Maud E. Weinschenk).
- Skokie (Niles Twp. H. S.): "The Trackman," by Cynthia Johnson, and "This Above All," by Barbara Simon (Priscilla Baker).
- Springfield: "Deadline," by Jackie Wollan, "Impromptu," by Becky Nelson, and "Memories of a Grandfather," by Linda Sucherman (Lois Body).
- Sterling: "Florence Nightingale, Jr.," by Beth Richter (Marie Dickson).
- Streator: "My Kid Brother," by Sandra Berge (Lucille M. Tkach); "A Visit to the Circus" and "The Railroad Track," by Jack Wakey, and "The Ideal Date," by Alice Suetz; "End of the Road," by Sheldra Gauden (Faye Hemrighous).
- Taylorville: "A Christmas Tragedy," by Pat Hartsfield (Elizabeth Stanfield).
- Urbana: "Numberland," by Nancy Farnham (Marien Seward).
- Wenona: "Dedication to a Friend," by Donna Lahman, and "America—1954," by Charlotte Huses (Marcia Wright).